

MINUTES
Inventory Subgroup —
(formed from the Education and Training Workgroup)

October 15, 2002 (first meeting of this group)
Massachusetts Hospital Association, Burlington MA

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The members of the Inventory Subgroup introduced themselves. Present at the meeting were: Allison Hackbarth, Meg Hogan, Sandy Collins, Shepard Cohen, Joseph Bowlds and Carl Edwards. (Affiliation of each member are listed at the end of these minutes.)

1) The goal and project plan of the Inventory Subgroup was presented and there were no changes.

Goal: To build essential statewide infrastructure to ensure access to training and educational opportunities for healthcare professionals, public health professionals, first responders and others in response to their bioterrorism and emergency preparedness needs.

Project Plan: To develop an Request for Quotes (RFQ) to contract with a vendor to develop a statewide web-based database/clearing house/catalog of existing training and educational opportunities.

2) The first discussion was centered on the advantages and disadvantages of purchasing the TrainingFinder Real-time Affiliate Integrated Network (TRAIN) through the Public Health Foundation versus funding a separate vendor to develop and manage an inventory database. TRAIN is a web-based learning management system for public health organizations that need to rapidly expand their training capacity. It is built on the existing www.trainingfinder.org infrastructure – the nation's largest clearinghouse of distance learning courses for public health professionals, containing information on over 600 nationally available public health courses by over 130 registered course providers. One of the main goals of TRAIN is integrate national, state, and local public health continuing education and training initiatives into a coordinated, national learning system while allowing states and others to maintain their branding and "local flavor." More information about TRAIN is available at: www.phf.org.

Questions that came up in the discussion were:

- ◆ How many state health departments have already purchased TRAIN?
- ◆ How many state health departments are considering purchasing TRAIN?
- ◆ For those states that have already purchased the system, what has been their response to it?
- ◆ What is the long-term availability of updated software, hosting and technical assistance?

As more information is needed to help make a decision, Allison Hackbarth will follow-up with the Public Health Foundation regarding the questions above.

3) The second discussion was centered on functions of developing and designing an inventory database and specific criteria or information needed to be able to list/post a training program into the inventory.

The short-term function of the database is to create one master place where all target audiences in MA can access information about available training/courses. Various search functions were discussed, for example, searching for a course by topic, by profession, by location, etc. The database will be evolving to include other functions and search options as appropriate or based on feedback from the users. Pilot testing was suggested as one way to gather feedback from users in the development phase.

Criteria elements for each course listing that were discussed included: title of course, date(s)/time(s)/location(s), one time offering versus multiple offerings, availability of continuing education credits, goals/objectives clearly stated, applicability of training and/or skills learned, target audience, evaluation by students, biography or background of instructor, teaching strategies (e.g., lecture, group discussion, case study analysis, interactive problem solving, group exercise, etc.), delivery of training (face to face instruction, satellite, web-based, etc.), prerequisites, if applicable, rating/review function.

Longer-term functions that could be added to the database are: student registration through the database, tracking of students and the courses they have taken, including additional criteria for each course listing, in addition to the ones listed in the paragraph above (e.g., designate if the course addresses public health core competencies or emergency preparedness competencies), information regarding courses that are pertinent or appropriate to various audiences such as public health nurses, physicians, boards of health, etc.) An additional longer-term function of the inventory database will be to identify gaps in trainings available and to address these gaps through the Education and Training Work Group and specifically with the Curriculum Subgroup that will be formed shortly.

4) Meg Hogan presented a draft version of a logistics spreadsheet that could be incorporated as a function into the Inventory Database. The purpose of this spreadsheet is to provide information on training rooms that are available around the state for instructors/trainers to use when implementing a classroom or in-person course. The subgroup (and members of the larger Education and Training Work Group) mentioned they and their colleagues have their own lists that would be very useful to combine into one master list. Information that should be included with each listing is: location (by city/town and by bioterrorism region, contact name, phone and email, cost of room if any, if breakfast/lunch/dinner is provided by facility, availability of breakout rooms, and availability of training equipment (LCD projects, laptops, overhead projector, etc.). Other discussion centered on the logistics of updating this information on a regular basis.

5) Action Items.

Allison Hackbarth will:

- ◆ Follow up with the Public Health Foundation to gather more information about the TRAIN system.
- ◆ Draft an RFQ to contract with a vendor. Until further decisions are made by senior DPH staff, the RFQ will be in one of two form: contract with a vendor to independently develop a inventory database, or 2) contract with a vendor to administer and manage the TRAIN system. The draft RFQ will be distributed to the Inventory Subgroup for review and feedback.

Bioterrorism Education and Training Work Group—Inventory Subgroup

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